

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim



Spc. Jonathan Lucas sees his daughter for the first time during a reunion ceremony Dec. 24. Lucas was among the Soldiers of the 557th Medical Company returning from an 11-month deployment in Iraq.

Medevac unit arrives Soldiers return home from Iraq just in time for Christmas

Story and photos by
Karen Edge
221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

The hustle and bustle of Christmas preparations helped families fill the last days of anticipation before the return of loved ones assigned to 557th Medical Company, Ground Ambulance who deployed to Iraq just under a year ago.

In the dark, early morning hours of Christmas Eve, family members gathered inside Hangar 1036 at Wiesbaden Army Airfield and counted down the minutes until their Soldiers returned — just in time for snow and mistletoe.

"I'll be home for Christmas" ... and they were home — all 109 Soldiers deployed and redeployed without one serious combat injury or death.

Getting ready to go

"It was crazy. We got orders a month out, but before then there was the rumor that we were getting deployed so we had that fear, anticipation, anxiety. My wife had just come to Germany and it was really hard for her to accept the fact that we were going to go downrange so soon," said Spc. Jonathan Lucas. After much discussing and planning the Lucases, like so many other Soldiers and their families, got their powers of attorney, finances and other affairs in order and marched on.

"The whole company had that anxiety, but we prepared well. Our commander did an awesome job in the preparations. Like anyone would be, we were nervous and scared," recalled Lucas. "I had the opportunity not to go, to stay back here in the rear detachment, but I chose to go. I didn't want to leave my wife, but I had to go to complete the mission, to be with my fellow Soldiers," he said.

"It's so surreal too, you know. A year ago we were preparing to go there and now we're back here. It's like we were never there, like it never really happened."

Many of the 557th Soldiers are young, only 19 or 20 years old, and have had the tough job of administering aid to men and women wounded in convoy attacks, stabilizing them in the field and then getting them to medical facilities. The unit's 40 ambulances were driven more than 170,000 miles across dangerous terrain without suffering a serious injury or combat fatality. Their efforts enabled Welcome Home ceremonies for countless other American families.

"Our predeployment preparations made the deployment a success. Everything from the logistics prep of vehicles to the live-fire exer-

cises in Graf (Grafenwöhr) to packing our gear gave us the first taste of what to expect when we got there," said Staff Sgt. Luis Villa, the unit's platoon sergeant. "That training was crucial because when we got down there, it was free game. From experience every time you do some type of training you may think it is boring or that you won't ever have to do it for real. But this is a different war. Whether it's your job or some-

"When the helicopters got to the landing pads and you saw the black bags it was really hard. You thought, that could be you. You see so many 18- to 22-year-old Marines coming in in body bags." — Sgt. Luis Villa, 557th Medical Company, Ground Ambulance

one else's, you will have to perform it. So know your job and know it well. When downrange don't get complacent; treat everything seriously. No matter how bad you think you have it there is always somebody in the same area who has it even worse."

Time to think

A constant reminder of what was at stake for the 557th was the call signaling incoming "angels," a term used by helicopter crews to let medical personnel on the ground know they were arriving with dead bodies.

"When the helicopters got to the landing pads and you saw the



While families hug and reunite an unidentified 557th Soldier takes time to herself and sits aside in the bleachers.

black bags it was really hard. You thought, that could be you. You see so many 18- to 22-year-old Marines coming in in body bags," said Villa. "It is never good when you hear the call for angels because you know somebody is coming in dead. I stayed focused. I always made sure my Soldiers were busy training or doing PT [physical training] when they weren't on convoys. I kept them too busy to be thinking about the situation. Because you give them too much time to think about it, and well, down there too much time to think..."

Sometimes thinking couldn't be avoided, especially when hit with a close call. Lucas recalled his convoy being struck by two Improvised Explosive Devices in which two Air Force personnel were injured.

"It was in the middle of this intersection with civilians where every day people sell their food and stuff. Just regular traffic all around when they hit us with the first IED," Lucas said he couldn't comprehend the situation.

"It blew my mind that these guys were going to kill us and there were innocent people all around. That just blew my mind — they just don't care. We were there trying to help them and they were trying to kill us

and their own innocent people. It made me want to do my job even better. And it served as a reality check for me. Prior to that none of my convoys had been hit, and when it finally happened it was like 'wake up man, somebody is trying to kill you.' It's not just something you see on the news."

Because of situations like that the Americans' perception of Iraqis may be one-sided, said Lucas, who felt it was important Americans know not all Iraqis are terrorists.

Making friends

"Everyone sees the negative things about them [Iraqis] on the news, but the ones I met were really nice people who just wanted to make a living and provide for their families. They're not all bad people. It just takes one to ruin things. For the most part they are kind and generous people. I told one Iraqi that my daughter was going to be born soon and the next day he brought my daughter a dress. They have so little yet are willing to give so much. Just the fact that I was there and could help them was the biggest thing for me."

Both Villa and Lucas made many Iraqi and coalition friends during the deployment — friendships they both agree will last a lifetime. Shortly after arriving in Iraq most of the Army units left, and the Soldiers of the 557th found

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Rhony Bogges greets her husband, Sgt. Steve Bogges, with an emotional embrace following a reunion ceremony at Wiesbaden Army Airfield. Assigned to the 557th Medical Company, Ground Ambulance, Bogges returned from an 11-month deployment to Iraq.



Soldiers of the 557th Medical Company, Ground Ambulance, march into Hangar 1036 at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, where family members and loved ones waited early Christmas Eve morning.

themselves working with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and adjusting to the way the other services did things.

“Man, civilians are there, Marines, Air Force, sailors, Soldiers, everyone is there. I made a lot of friends who I know are going back for their second tours and I pray for them and wish them a safe return,” said Lucas.

When there was time, Villa would gather his platoon on Sundays to play soccer at a stadium surrounded by local shops in Al Asad. For their first tournament, their coalition soccer team was formed with Army, Marine Corps and Navy personnel as well as Iraqis.

“It was a lot of fun. They’d come out with no shoes and stand on the sidelines to watch as we played,” he said. Villa recalled a time the team was short one player and asked a local Iraqi to join, but the man had no shoes. Already wearing his cleats, Villa loaned the man a pair of tennis shoes to play. After the game the man tried to return the shoes, but Villa insisted he keep them.

“We made good friends, good relations with those guys,” said Villa, who later learned that one of the shop owners had actually played for the Iraqi Olympic soccer team. Two other Iraqi men they often played with were later rumored to have been beheaded for helping the Americans.

“That’s the hardest part. Just giving them something as simple as a Tylenol made us like God to them. But they couldn’t come to us for help without worrying about what the insurgents would do to them, and if they don’t come to us we can’t help them. It’s so hard for them, just trying to live. All the sacrifices we made going there were worth it to me,” said Villa.

With all the help they did provide, Lucas and Villa expressed a desire to do more.

“I have kids so it was really hard when I saw these underfed, barefoot children begging for food, for simple things that we take for granted, like a piece of gum,” said Villa.

But there was no safe way to give them anything from the convoys. “If we started handing out anything at all from the convoys it would have been too dangerous. We feared

“I am very disappointed with the press. I understand freedom of the press, heck, I defend it. But they don’t see the whole picture. Not everything that comes on TV is reality. It’s easy for them to fly in and get their stories and get out. But we are the ones on the front line, day to day, going on convoys we don’t know if we’ll return from.” – Spc. Jonathan Lucas, 557th Medical Company, Ground Ambulance

the children and people would start rushing the convoys for our handouts and we were worried about running them over,” explained Villa.

Processing the changes

With many experiences to share and memories to ponder Soldiers from the 557th are reintegrating now. Christmas has come and gone. The new year is under way, and the Soldiers are finding their places in their families once again.

“It’s hard. A lot changed while we were gone. My first day home I woke up late, it was good. My wife got up and made me pancakes,” said Villa. The hardest part however, was having his child not remember who he was. Villa deployed just a month after his son was born. Almost a year later his son didn’t recognize him.

“The first night back he wouldn’t let me hold him, so I had to let him go as part of the reintegration. I had to be happy holding my 3-year-old daughter, but the next day he saw me playing with her. He felt safe and slowly

made his way back to me.”

Villa and Lucas jumped back and forth from predeployment training to talking about what they did downrange and then back to being home again. Their stories, just a small composite of what the unit saw and did together, gives a glimpse into going to war, a glimpse much different than how they feel the

war is portrayed by national media coverage.

“I am very disappointed with the press. I understand freedom of the press, heck, I defend it. But they don’t see the whole picture. Not everything that comes on TV is reality. It’s easy for them to fly in and get their stories and get out. But we are the ones on the front line, day to day, going on convoys we don’t know if we’ll return from,” said Lucas.

Despite both Lucas and Villa’s perceptions of how the media portrays the war, both said they knew people do care and support the troops.

Care packages

“We had people from the States send care packages through the Adopt a Platoon program. From high schools and kindergartens, it was really nice. I got letters from a fifth-grader with candies and cookies. It would bring the morale up. We even got two posters from a high school back in the States. All the students signed all their names, and it made it out to the 557th. We left them there on the wall for when the other units took over so they knew we were thought of and supported. Whether you agree or disagree with the war, we’re service members doing our job, and every time I see a negative story printed

it is like a stab in the back,” said Lucas.

Being home also brings a sense of guilt for Villa, who said he felt like he should still be there, helping his wounded comrades. He made it clear the Christmas reunion with his wife and daughter was the best gift he’d ever received, but wished he could still be helping wounded and fallen friends and foe.

Distracted by stains on his boots, Lucas looked down and pointed out one red dot and one brownish-colored splatter. “The red one is Kool-Aid and the other one is blood,” Lucas said. Then his thoughts returned to being home and he said, “As Americans we have so much. I’ll never take it for granted again, the simple things, a warm bed or taking a shower without the need of shower shoes. I’ll never take our freedom, our blessings, my family or my life for granted.”



Family Readiness Group members, spouses and Soldiers hug and greet each other during the 557th Medical Company Welcome Home reception Dec. 24.

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Photo by Andrew Stamer

Engineers honored for service

Dylan Ogletree looks on as his father, Sgt. Justin Ogletree, receives the Bronze Star from Col. Lee Staab, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Europe District, during a ceremony Dec. 6. Ogletree and Master Sgt. Steven Spears, both from the Emergency Operations Center, received the medals for their honorable service in Iraq. In addition to the Bronze Star, Spears also received a Meritorious Service Medal. During the ceremony those who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait and Kosovo were honored, as were those whose contributions led to the district's successes within the past year.

Speakers share insights with students during USO tour

A historian and reality television show "survivor" spoke to students at Wiesbaden's Gen. H.H. Arnold High School Jan. 11.

Carl Smith, historian and author of several books including "Fringe Patriots," said he was determined to go everywhere Soldiers are stationed to thank them for their service.

Tina Wesson, a "Survivor, Outback" champion, was also touring on behalf of the USO to share her experiences with Soldiers and family members.

"I have a real passion for the United States of America and an equal passion for the

military," said Smith. "If it were not for the military I don't think I would have ever grown up.

"Growing up starts with learning how to control yourself, and controlling yourself is the first step to gaining integrity, honor and, frankly, some peace in your life," he told the students.

"I have watched old men and young men alike die defending people they didn't even know," Smith said. "There is no greater love in this life than to be willing to give up your life for some cause."



Photos by Karen Edge

"Survivor" Tina Wesson talks to Wiesbaden high school students. Photo left: Historian and author Carl Smith shares his views during the USO tour.

Wiesbaden Signal unit earns leadership awards

By Maj. Tom Folse and Maj. Herman Stewart
Special to the Herald Union

The 102nd Signal Battalion, based at Wiesbaden Army Airfield, took home top honors as the "Best of the Best" in a leadership competition hosted by the 2nd Signal Brigade at Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg recently.

This "Night of the Stars" was the organization's first civilian recognition ceremony. It drew more than 250 Soldiers, civilians, family members and friends to the pavilion's ballroom to honor nearly 1,300 American and local national employees who serve customers across the European theater, Africa and Southwest Asia.

The spotlight shone throughout the evening on collective prize-winners for the Best Network Operations and Security Center, and the Best Network Service Center. With six NOSCs and 22 NSCs, competition was collegial, but very com-

petitive.

The evening's lead winner was the 102nd Signal Battalion, which took home top honors for the best NOSC and best NSC, the Giessen Network Service Center.

Awards were presented to individual employees in four separate categories including the U.S. and

local national employee of the year, in both the junior and senior categories. Once again the spotlight landed on the 102nd as it captured its third award of the evening with Michael Talley, Hanau NSC, taking top honors for the U.S. junior category. Topping the night, Gloria Figueroa, a long-time employee of

the 102nd Signal Battalion, was presented her 40-Year Length of Service Certificate by Col. Robert S. Ferrell, brigade commander, and Brig. Gen. Carroll F. Pollett, 5th Signal Command commander.

Special tribute was also paid to volunteers and Family Readiness Group leaders from the brigade. Rec-

ognized for their outstanding contributions to the community and the organization were Thomas Hogue, Wiesbaden NSC, and Dawn Beard, FRG leader. A U.S. Army Europe commemorative medallion and Italian ceramic roses were presented to all FRG leaders by the brigade commander.

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Community news notes

Health fair set

Start the new year off right and join Team 221st Sports and Fitness Jan. 22 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a full day of health and fitness at Tony Bass Fitness Center. Events include a 5-K fun run/walk, free vision, blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, body fat testing, aerobic triathlon, bench press competition, mini-massages and martial arts demonstrations.

NCO club meets monthly

The Sgt. Morales Club meets the first Wednesday of the month in Room 210 of the Welcome Center at Wiesbaden Army Airfield at 2 p.m. All Sgt. Morales and Sgt. Audie Murphy inductees are welcome to attend. For more information call civ (0160) 9211 2266.

Flea market Jan. 22

The Community Activity Center hosts an indoor flea market Jan. 22. Sellers can rent tables for \$10 on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors open at 8 a.m. Call mil 337-5750 or civ (0611) 705-5750.

Emergency care providers needed

Army Community Service is seeking emergency placement and respite care providers. Emergency placement provides interim care for children removed from a home due to abuse, neglect or other family emergencies. Respite care provides a temporary rest period for family

members responsible for regular care of children with disabilities. Anyone interested in volunteering their home and time to provide care should call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

Gaming fun

The Community Activity Center hosts a game night every Thursday at 5 p.m. If you enjoy playing board games such as Monopoly, Yahtzee, Tabu, Pictionary, Battleship, Scrabble, Risk and others, then Thursday is your night. Bring a friend or challenge others.



Positions open

Andrews Federal Credit Union has career opportunities throughout the community for branch and AFCU-Euro headquarters positions. Log on to their website at www.andrewsfcu.org for more information.

Army Community Service seeks a volunteer program manager. Duties include maintaining files, recording hours and ensuring all volunteers receive an orientation. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

The **American Arms Hotel** is hiring front desk clerks and custodial workers for housekeeping. Applicants must be U.S. citizens and can apply at the Nonappropriated Fund Personnel Office in Building 1020 at

Wiesbaden Army Airfield. For more information call mil 338-7883 or civ (0611) 343 667.

Thrift Shop open

The Wiesbaden Community Thrift Shop is open every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4-7 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the first Saturday of each month. Consignments are only accepted on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Volunteers are also needed. Call civ (0611) 74261.

Discounted meals

Pick up a coupon book at the Rheinlander Club in Dexheim for discounts and specials on lunch and dinner deals being offered through January.

FCC providers needed

Join the 221st Base Support Battalion Family Child Care program. Stay at home with your children while building a career. Providers receive free training and nationally recognized accreditation. For information call mil 338-7729 or civ (0611) 380-7729.

Playgroup at chapel

Little Lambs prayer and playgroup is held from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays at the Hainerberg Chapel. A parent must remain with the child during the playtime and bring a snack or drink for their toddler. For more

information call mil 337-1570 or civ (0611) 705-1570.

Newcomer class

Newcomers to Wiesbaden are encouraged to attend Army Family Team Building's Welcome to Wiesbaden classes held the first and third Monday of the month at the Newcomers Information Center in Room 240 at the American Arms Hotel. Call mil 337-5754 or civ (0611) 705-5754 for information and to register.

Leader training

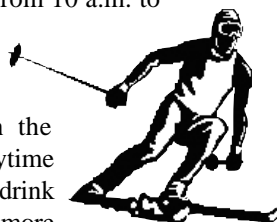
A Family Readiness Group basic leader training will be held Jan. 20 from 10 a.m. to noon in Room 22 at Army Community Service in Hainerberg Housing. Reservations must be made in advance. Call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

AA meetings

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held at the Wiesbaden Army Airfield Community Counseling Center at Building 1526 every Wednesday at 7 p.m. For information on other AA meetings call the Army Substance Abuse Program coordinator at mil 337-1710 or civ (0611) 705-1710.

Ski trips

Wiesbaden and Dexheim Outdoor Recreation centers offer several skiing packages throughout the month of January. Jan. 29 — skiing in Feldberg, Black Forest;



Jan. 22 — skiing in Engelberg, Switzerland; Jan. 22-23 — skiing on the Feldberg.

Youth programs

Dance, ballet, photography, piano classes, horseback riding lessons and screenwriting courses are available through Child and Youth Services. Students must be registered through Central Registration at Army Community Service, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. For more information call mil 337-5383 or civ (0611) 705-5383.

WCSC luncheon

The Wiesbaden Community Spouses Club luncheon will be held Jan. 19 at the Community Activity Center. Membership to the club is open to all Soldiers, civilians and family members. For reservations call civ (0611) 890-7872.

Story time at library

The Wiesbaden community library holds Story Time every Wednesday at 10:15 a.m. Targeted for pre-school aged children, the program includes listening to a story and a craft time.

Fitness classes

A wide variety of fitness classes are offered everyday by Team 221st Sports and Fitness. Learn to do pilates, yoga, kickboxing and more. Yoga classes are held at the Tony Bass Fitness Center at 6:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday; 4:30 p.m. Tuesday; 11 a.m. Thursday; and 9:30 a.m. Friday. Tai chi classes are held at 7:45 p.m. Thursday as well as other martial arts classes. Ving tsun kung fu is held at 7:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday at Tony Bass Fitness Center; Northern praying mantis kung fu at 7:45 p.m. Tuesday; and buj in kan budo tai ju tsu at 5:30 p.m. at McCully Barracks fitness center on Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. Marital arts classes cost \$10 each or \$100 for 12. Aerobics classes are also held every Monday and Wednesday at 4 p.m. at Hainerberg Elementary School. Indoor cycling is held at 6:45 a.m. and 5:45 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday and at 9:30 a.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. Call mil 337-5943 or civ (0611) 705-5943.

EFMP support

Join the Exceptional Family Program support group the first Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 22 at Army Community Service, Building 7790 in Hainerberg Housing. For more information call mil 337-5034 or civ (0611) 705-5034.

222nd BSB — Baumholder, Neubrück, Strassburg

Get your T-shirt

Anyone who participated in last year's "Walk My Soldier Back From Iraq" program may now pick up their T-shirts and certificates at the Hall of Champions. Contact the Sports Office if you have any questions at mil485-7176/6671.

Become an officer

The 222nd Base Support Battalion Officer Candidate Selection Board will be held March 8 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the TSD large classroom, Building 8475.

The board is open to any qualified enlisted Soldier who is interested in becoming a commissioned officer.

For more information contact Sgt. Melissa Reeves or Chris Macri at 222nd BSB Headquarters, Building 8698, or call mil485-6788.

All packets must be completed and submitted to the 222nd BSB Adjutant's Office by March 2.

ACS
mil 485-8188

New hours

Army Community Service now has new hours on Thursdays. They are open from 1-5 p.m.

Army Family Team Building

Feb. 17, Level II, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Feb. 1-2, Level II, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Feb. 22-23, Level III, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Family Readiness

The Family Readiness Liaison Council meets Feb 17 from 8-10 a.m. Call mil485-8542 or send an email to mari.haley@104asg.mwr.army.mil for more information. Limited child care is available with advance registration.

AFAP conference

The annual Army Family Action Plan conference will be held Feb. 14-15 from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Call Ginalyn Cowles for information at mil485-6455 or send an email to ginalyn.cowles@104asg.mwr.army.mil.

Marriage support

Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22: Maintaining Love in a Healthy Relationship, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23: Happily Ever After — Adjusting to New Marriage, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25: Anger Free Living, 9-11 a.m.
Feb. 7, 14, 28: Divorce Support Group, noon to 2 p.m.
Feb. 1: Male and Female — Separate But Equal
Feb. 2: Communicating As A Couple
Feb. 8: Interpersonal Communi-

Happenings



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Ring in the New Year

Brig. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, 1st Armored Division, assistant division commander, and his wife Teresa toast in the new year during the annual commander's New Year's reception. Tucker was promoted to brigadier general just hours before in a ceremony at the 1st AD headquarters in Wiesbaden. About 250 German and American guests attended the annual event to help usher in the new year.

cation

Feb. 9: Our Money
Feb. 15: Love and Intimacy
Feb. 16: Our Foundation, Sand or Stone?
Feb. 22: What it Means to Be Married
Feb. 23: What's Your Love Language.

Job ready

Feb. 1, 15: PCS Pre-Employment Class, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. This class will teach you how to start seeking employment before you PCS to your next duty station.
Feb. 8, 22: 10 Steps to a Federal Job, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Learn to navigate through the federal job system.
Feb. 25: Resume Writing, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Cash management

Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22: Successful Money Management, 2-4 p.m. Participants will learn how to identify, solve and avoid problems, make a spending plan and select and manage credit.
Feb. 2: Checkbook Management, 9-11 a.m.
Feb. 9: How to Get Out and Stay Out of Debt, 9-11 a.m.
Feb. 16: Living and Saving on a Shoestring, 9-11 a.m.
Feb. 23: His Values, Her Values, Our Money, 9-11 a.m.

FLAG orientation

A Families Learning About Germany orientation will be held Feb. 15-16 at 8:30 a.m. The course provides an opportunity to become acquainted with Germany. On Jan. 28 (optional), attendees will take a field trip to local German shopping areas and restaurants. Get practical experience in using the German train and bus systems. Limited free child care is available with reservations.

Parenting

Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24: Boot Camp for Dads, 2-4 p.m. This is a four-week program for new dads.
Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23: Coffee Break, 10-11:30 a.m.
Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22: Nurturing Parenting, 10 a.m. to noon
Feb. 7, 14, 28: Nurturing Parent/Child, 3-5 p.m.
Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24: Nurturing Program, 10 a.m. to noon
Feb. 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 25, 28: Parent and Tot Playgroup, 10-11:30 a.m.

Life coaches

Visiting professional counselors are available to provide support and guidance if you are dealing with conflict, worry or difficulty in or outside of your home. Counselors are available to meet with you when and where you are most comfortable. Contact Army Community

Service to schedule a meeting at mil 485-6604/8188.

Youth Services
civ (06783) 6-7276, mil 485-7276

Looking for help

Youth Services seeks youth and adult volunteers to assist with clubs, sporting and recreational events.

YS activities

Feb. 1-18: Black History Month Poster Contest, sixth- through eighth-grade, Underground, 2-8 p.m., admission is free.
Feb. 12: Valentine's dance, ninth-through 12th-grade, Teen Cafe, 7-11 p.m.
Feb. 12: Valentine's dance, sixth-through eighth-grade, Underground, \$5.
Feb. 14-18: Black History Month Exhibit, ninth-through 12th-grade,

3-8 p.m., admission is free.

Participants must be registered with Child and Youth Services.

CYS
civ 06783-67003, mil 485-7003

Child care offered for special events

Child care is available for events in the Baumholder community. The cost is \$2.50 an hour per child, \$2.75 an hour per child after 5 p.m. and on weekends. This service is subject to availability of staff. Children must be registered with Child and Youth Services. Call mil485-7393 for more information.

Outdoor Rec
mil 485-7182, civ (06783) 6-7182

Plan your fun

Plan your free time now and experience Europe with Baumholder's Outdoor Recreation Center. They offer the following trips throughout Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland and Holland:

Jan. 21, 5-10 p.m.

Switzerland ski weekend to Interlaken, \$125

Jan. 29-30, 5-10 p.m.

Garmisch ski weekend to Garmisch, \$195

Feb.-5, 4 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Black Forest ski trip to the Feldberg, \$65

Feb. 10-14, 10-10 p.m.

Austria ski weekend to Gastein, \$415

Feb. 12, 3 a.m. to midnight

Trip to Amsterdam, Holland, \$85

Feb. 19, 4 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Black Forest ski trip to the Feldberg, \$65

Feb. 25-27, 5-10 p.m.

Switzerland ski weekend to Interlaken, \$125

March 4-6, 5-10 p.m.

Garmisch ski weekend, \$195

March 11-13, 5-10 p.m.

Switzerland ski weekend to Interlaken, \$125

March 17-20, 10-10 p.m.

Austria ski weekend to Gastein, \$315

March 26, 4 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Black Forest ski trip to the Feldberg, \$65

Smith spearheads drive for Fisher House

By LeAnne MacAllister
222nd Base Support Battalion Public
Affairs Office

Smith Elementary School students were busy this holiday season. In addition to musical performances popping up around post, the students geared up for yet another serving of holiday spirit.

The student council, led by adviser Donna Frick, elected to go beyond the gates of Baumholder in selfless service this year. The student council engineered a drive to collect items needed by the Fisher House at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. The project was organized by Kenrick Ellis, president; Jennifer Palmer, vice president; and Nicole Valdemoro, secretary of the Smith Elementary student council.

The students began preparation for the donations drive in November, said Ellis, a Smith Elementary sixth-grader. "Mrs. Frick got an email and we talked to the kids about it. Then we made presentations to everyone in grades kindergarten through sixth."

"We made signs and told the kids what to bring — white pillowcases, wash cloths and individually wrapped snack goods," said fifth-grader Jennifer Palmer.

"The activity was really nice and interesting. We've never done anything like this before, and it helps a lot of people," said Ellis.

The Fisher House is a home away from home for families of Soldiers receiving medical care at nearby major military hospitals. Houses are donated by the Fisher family of New York. Families who stay at the house are asked to pay \$10 a day to cover miscellaneous operating expenses. There are two



Photo by LeAnne MacAllister

Children from Smith Elementary School carry a box of donated goodies into one of the Fisher Houses in Landstuhl.

Fisher Houses adjacent to Landstuhl Hospital.

Kathy Gregory, manager of the Landstuhl

Fisher Houses, provided the Smith Elementary School representatives with a tour and video presentation after they dropped off the

donations.

"Christmas came early for us thanks to what Smith Elementary did," she said.

April 16, 3 a.m. to midnight

Trip to Keukenhof Tulip Garden, Holland, \$85

April 30, 3 a.m. to midnight

Trip to Keukenhof Tulip Garden, Holland, \$85

May 14, 3 a.m. to midnight

Trip to Keukenhof Tulip Garden, Holland, \$85.

Paintball action

Paintball games are offered at the Rolling Hills Campgrounds Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cost is \$12 for rental, \$9 field fee (using own gear). Paintballs are available at field.

Happenings continued

Library

civ (06783) 6-1740, mil 485-1740

Library collection

The Baumholder Library collection includes 26,000 books, audio/video products, CD-ROM reference and online services, and 155 magazines and newspapers. Special services include reference section,

children's section, automated U. S. Army Europe Library system, CD-ROM computers, Internet, word processing services, printers, online catalog computers, coin-operated copiers and typewriters. More than 75 new DVD titles were recently added to the library's collection and more are expected. The library is open Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. It is closed on Friday and open on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Rheinlander

civ (06783) 6-7507, mil 485-7507

Valentine Brunch

A Valentine's Sunday Brunch is scheduled Feb. 6 at the Rheinlander. Two seatings are offered, 10-11:30 a.m. and noon to 1:30 p.m. The cost is \$7.50 for adults, \$5.50 for children age 10-15 and \$3.50 for those age 6-9. Children under age 6 eat for free. Reservations are needed. Call mil 485-7507.

Striker's

civ (06783) 6-6569, mil 485-6569

Strike Zone

Enjoy lunch Mondays through Saturdays at 11:30 a.m. at the Strike Zone or stop by the lounge on Sundays for NFL Sunday football.

Rudy's

civ (06781) 41166, mil 485-8602

NFL football

Every Sunday is NFL football night from 6 p.m. to midnight. Enjoy weekly kitchen specials. A Super Bowl Party will be held Feb. 6 starting at 9 p.m.

Athletic club

civ (06783) 6-6156, mil 485-6156

Aerobics schedule

Mondays, Wednesdays: Beginning Step/Toning, noon

Tuesdays, Thursdays: Beginning Step/Toning, 7 p.m.

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: Step Aerobics, 7 p.m.

Tuesdays, Thursdays: Step/Toning Aerobics, 9:15 a.m.

Tuesdays, Thursdays: Water Aerobics, 9:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Fridays: \$1 Family Swim, 5-8 p.m.

Fridays: Dog Day Friday, Clifford, the inflatable hound from 3-5 p.m.

Golf course

civ (06783) 6-6156, mil 485-6156

Open for business

The pro shop is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the driving range lights stay on until 8:30 p.m. daily.

Framing, photo

civ (06783) 6-8793, mil 485-8793

Photo studio

Reserve your appointment for Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday from 2-8 p.m. or the last weekend of each month from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call mil 485-8793.

German families host single Soldiers

Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava
222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

Being a Soldier involves great personal sacrifice. Those who have chosen this path in life often leave their homes, families, loved ones and friends behind to serve their country.

At no other time of the year is this more evident than during the holiday season, when single Soldiers often spend Christmas and New Year's squandered away in their barracks, holiday cheer but a memory of years gone by.

For 17 single Baumholder Soldiers this was not the case when 14 German families came forward and opened their doors to them for the holidays. That treat was part of Operation Good Cheer, an initiative that helps place single Soldiers in the homes of German families during the holiday season.

"I enjoyed it," said Spc. Emmanuel Deleon. "We stayed with the family for three days. We took a walk to this park with rock formations that were millions of years old. We played games like the German version of 'Sorry,' listened to American oldies music and talked. It was a lot of fun."

Deleon was joined by Pfc. Christopher Myers. Myers and Deleon are assigned to the 4th Battalion,



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Brig. Gen. Michael S. Tucker, 1st Armored assistant division commander, greets Pfc. Sam Howell, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, and his German host family, the Baabs, during a New Year's reception.

27th Field Artillery Regiment.

Each year numerous German families register their desire with the 222nd Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office to host an American Soldier for Christmas dinner, New Year's or both. Some families offer to take in more than one Soldier for the holidays.

"Public Affairs has offered this program for several years now and the outpouring of generosity by our host nation families is truly

heartwarming," said Madeleine Dwoiakowski, 222nd Base Support Battalion public affairs officer. "These families unconditionally open their doors to Soldiers each year and offer to take them in for a day or two and often longer."

As an added bonus for Soldiers and the German families who participate in Operation Good Cheer, both receive an invitation to the assistant division commander's New Year's reception. Ten families

along with their Soldiers mingled with about 250 German and U.S. dignitaries during this year's reception Jan. 7.

Over the years several families and Soldiers have developed lasting relationships as a result of having participated in Operation Good Cheer.

When Soldiers elect to participate they are matched up with a German family by using common interests such as hobbies or pas-

simes. A few days before Christmas, the participating Soldiers and families gather at a German restaurant and get to know each other over a dinner hosted by Public Affairs. The families and Soldiers then set up a time and place where the family can meet the Soldier and take him or her to their home.

"Most of the participating families have at least one or two members who speak English so communication is not a problem," said Dwoiakowski.

"Of course if a Soldier speaks some German it improves things tremendously," she said. "You don't need to speak German like a native. The effort to communicate in their language is more than enough and serves as an excellent way of striking up a conversation."

"We also realize many people are a little apprehensive about starting up a conversation with someone they don't know so Public Affairs serves as an icebreaker for Soldiers and the families," she said.

During the dinner Soldiers are matched up, escorted and introduced to their German host family. They are left to get to know each other for a while and then a Public Affairs representative will return and help coordinate the family and Soldier's holiday plans.

Youth Services

A middle school lock-in is scheduled for Jan. 22 at the Underground for sixth- to eighth-grade students from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Cost is \$10. All participants must be registered with CYS and a signed permission slip must be turned in one week before each trip or event. For more information contact your local youth center or call the Youth Services administration at mil 485-7276.

Youth Sports

Baseball and softball registration for youth in ages 5-18 starts Jan. 31 and ends March 18. A current health assessment is required. Register at Community Youth Services, Building 8743.

For more information call CYS at mil 485-7003 or the Youth Sports Office at mil 485-7276.

Volunteers

Youth Services is looking for volunteers, youth and adults, to assist with special interest clubs and sporting/recreational events. For more information contact your local youth center or visit Baumholder's youth website at

Youth activities

www.baumholder.army.mil/youthsite/html/ys.htm

Youth clubs

Torch Club

Torch Clubs are chartered small-group leadership and service clubs for boys and girls age 11-13. A Torch Club is a vehicle through which club staff can help meet the special needs of younger adolescents at a critical stage in their development.

Keystone Club

Keystoning is the boys and girls movement's most dynamic teen program. Keystone Clubs are chartered small-group leadership and service clubs for boys and girls ages 14-18. Keystoners elect officers and plan and implement their own activities in six areas that cover service to club and community, leadership development, education and career exploration, unity, free enterprise and social recreation.

Teen Sports Club

The Teen Sports Club is a teen leadership group that promotes health, fitness and sports-related careers in boys and girls clubs.

Members meet on a regular basis to learn about issues inside and outside their club related to sports and fitness. Club members age 13-18 volunteer at least 25 hours as refer-

ees, coaches or in other athletic department support roles. For more information contact your local youth center.

Youth Services is looking for instructors to contract in instructional areas such as martial arts, gymnastics, music, tennis and more. For details call mil 485-7276.

Baumholder enters the hunt

By LeAnne MacAllister
222nd Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office

What makes living in Germany a great experience for you? Some love exploring villages and vineyards. Some people set the goal of hitting every European capital. Still others live for the thrill of the German hunt. But before gearing up and heading out into the wilderness, Germany requires preparation, instruction and the passage of a long, in-depth test.

Brandt Gardner, head instructor of the U.S. Air Forces Europe hunting course, could tell a hunter a thing or two about hunting. In fact he can probably recite the two-inch thick manual by heart. Frequently found at Shooters with other hunting enthusiasts, Gardner continues to add Soldiers to his class roster. Yet the program was almost cancelled.

Thanks to the support of 222nd Base Support Battalion commander Lt. Col. James E. Larsen, the program was kept from the budget cut.

"The class was almost stopped. Without Larsen's support it wouldn't have happened at all," said Gardner.

Soldiers originally showed a peak in interest for the hunting course upon their return from Iraq. The eight week course officially began on Oct. 12 with 15 pupils — a mix of Soldiers and family members. The classes were worked out around the military schedule.

Participants went along as assistants to a hunt. Members of the group studied four major areas: German customs and weapons laws, Jagersprech — the language used for

animal hunting originating in medieval times as a code for commoners to hunt since it used to be an activity for the rich and royals exclusively, conservation laws and hunting traditions.

"We as hunters in Germany don't kill, we harvest in a built-in area like Rheinland-Pfalz so there's no starvation," said Gardner. "We hit the sick, weak or old animals so that the strong have a chance to survive."

On Dec. 11 seven Soldiers and two family mem-

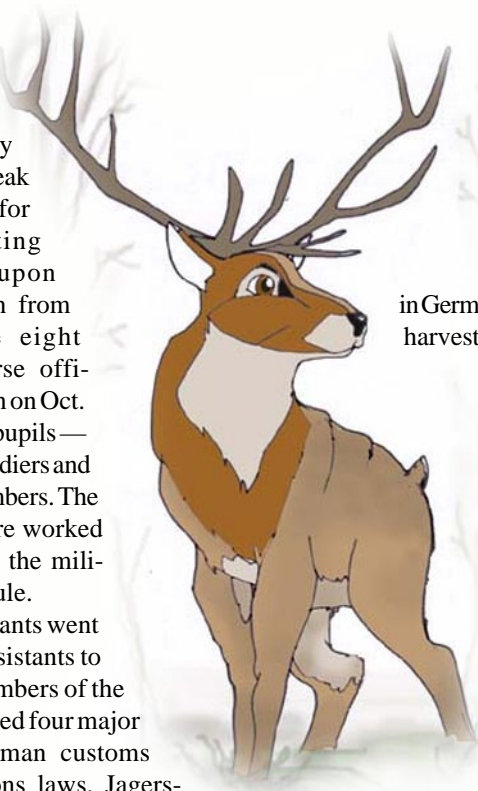
bers from the Baumholder community took the German hunting test. Volker Albert served as the German proctor and authority for the test. Dan McDermott, hunting and fishing coordinator for USAFE, served as the administrator.

"Everyone at Baumholder passed. There's usually a 20 percent failure rate or higher so they did very well. This group averaged a 95 percent," said McDermott.

"It wasn't nearly as hard as I thought, but we were well prepared," said 1st Lt. Lucas Sparks of the 4th Battalion 27th Field Artillery Regiment. Sparks is an avid hunter from Tennessee.

Gardner, thrilled with the outcome, immediately started organizing an awards ceremony — and of course, the group's first official hunt.

If you're interested in learning why a branch is left in the mouth of a male deer to signify his "last bite" or why hunters say "Waidmannsdank," contact Brandt Gardner at mil 485-6345.



Vet Clinic limits appointments

Members of the Baumholder Veterinary Clinic will be deploying soon so there will be no fixed or regular clinic hours until they return.

Updates will be posted on the board by the Veterinary Clinic and on the answering machine at the clinic as to appointment clinic days and over-the-counter sales days.

Someone will be available to take calls from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Customers are asked to be patient if the line is busy or they do not immediately reach someone.

All strays picked up by the Baumholder Military Police will be held at the Vogelweh Stray Animal Facility on Pulaski Barracks. For assistance in finding your pet contact the MP desk or the stray facility directly at civ (0631) 536-6588 or mil 489-6588. For more information call mil 485-6636 or civ (06783) 6-6636.